RSS – Ready for Some Stories?

Old vs. New

RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication, Rich Site Summary, or my favorite is Ready for Some Stories? The point to remember is that when you use RSS, information that you are interested in, comes to you. You don't have to visit a website to find out what is new.

RSS is the new Current Awareness tool; use it instead of subscribing to table of contents alerts from publishers.

Getting Started: A TWO-STEP PROCESS

1. Choose a Reader
2. Subscribe to feeds

The first thing you have to do is choose a reader. A Reader is the application that you use to collect your RSS feeds. It is also called an aggregator. "You can think of it as a pipe through which content flows from providers to consumers."[1]

Second, visit sites that offer RSS feeds, and subscribe on the spot.

RSS READER SHOWCASE

1. Web-based Readers
2. Browser-based Readers
3. Downloadable Readers

1) Web-Based Readers

The best feature of a web-based reader is that it is available to you from any computer with Internet access.

iGoogle

If you use Gmail, then you can set up an iGoogle page without having to register again. If you don't use Gmail, you can still sign up for an all purpose Google account, and then set up your own personal iGoogle page. An iGoogle page is similar to a home page you set up for yourself with Yahoo or MSNBC.

Visit *www.google.com* and create account if you are a new user

- Click on Orange RSS Icon on top right of home page
- Grab feed URL from CDC (right side of screen) Flu Updates

- Log into your Google account
- If this is your first time signing in, the Classic Home view is default
- Click on My Account at top right of page
- Choose iGoogle and your iGoogle page will appear
- Click ADD STUFF on the right side of page
- Scroll down, on left side of page, Add Feed or Gadget
- Copy and paste feed URL into the ADD by URL box
- You will see a confirmation message that the feed has been added
- Return to your iGoogle page to view your new feed
- All newly added feeds appear on the upper-left corner of the page
- Click on 'down' arrow in the newly formed feed box, Edit Settings, and choose the number of items that you would like displayed

My Yahoo

http://my.yahoo.com/

- Sign in or register for an account
- Click on My Yahoo on top, left side of page
- Click on Add Content on left side of page
- Click on Add RSS Feed
- Click **I'm Done**
- Click on center icon (Module Options) to choose # of items, date range, format
    - headlines only, headline & summary, etc.

Google Reader   (Bloglines is another choice)

- From iGoogle home page click on More (across top of page) and choose Reader
- ADD Subscription on left side of page
- Click on Refresh button
- Google Reader lets you organize your feeds in folders.
- There are two ways that you can manage your folders. When you first subscribe to a feed, you will be given the option to add the feed to a folder. OR
- Click on Manage Subscriptions…
- A feed subscription can be in one folder, multiple folders, or none at all.
- To unsubscribe, click on Manage Subscriptions on bottom left of screen
- To Delete, choose the feed you wish to remove and then click on the trash can

2) Browser-Based Readers
If you decide to go with a browser-based RSS reader, you will use the one that is built into your

favorite browser. However, I don't recommend using a browser-based reader because it is only available to you from one computer.

**Internet Explorer 7 – You can do this in Firefox as well.**

- Go to www.medlineplus.gov (or any page with a feed)
- Click on Email Updates and RSS on bottom right side of page
- Scroll down towards bottom of page
- Click on the orange RSS button
- A feed page for MedlinePlus will open up
- Click the Subscribe to this feed button on left side of page
- Menu will appear. Choose Subscribe to this Feed
- Box will appear. You may rename feed if desired
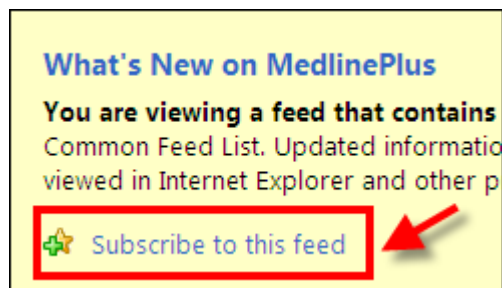
- Click on Subscribe, the box below will appear.
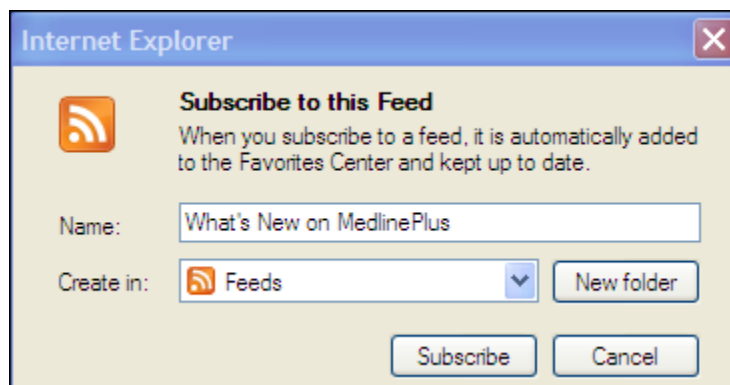
- To view your subscribed feeds, click on Star icon in your browser (on left side)
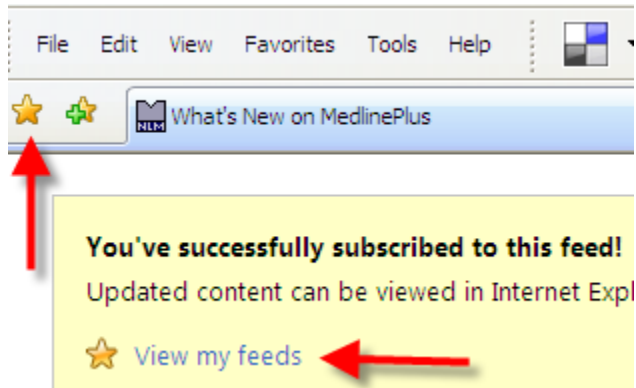
- Refresh feed to view updated pages

3) *Downloadable RSS Readers*

SharpReader
http://www.sharpreader.net/

SharpReader is a freely available, downloadable program that you can use to establish and access your RSS feeds.

- Appearance is very much like Outlook Express email program
- Paste RSS URL into Address window and click on Enter
- The Subscribe button on the top left of the screen will now be active
- Click on the Subscribe button
- To unsubscribe, right click on the feed name in the left pane and choose Unsubscribe

RSSOwl - Download is required
http://www.rssowl.org/

Thunderbird - Download is required
http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/thunderbird/

Where are the Feeds?

1) PubMed
- Create a feed from a search
- Run a search
- Choose Send to RSS from drop-down menu
- Click on Create Feed button
- Click on XML button
- New window opens up. Grab the feed URL, and paste it into your Reader

2) Ebling Library for the Health Sciences: http://ebling.library.wisc.edu/

- Lower left corner of website
- Click on Stay Current, then choose: Journals – Alpha or Journals – Topic

3) MEDWORM: http://www.medworm.com/

- MedWorm is a medical RSS filter engine.
- MedWorm collects updates from over 6000 authoritative data sources via RSS feeds.
- Example: **juvenile diabetes** and then filter by **nutrition** (Filter tab)
- From 39,635 results to 497
- You can now subscribe to this filtered Feed in any RSS reader or in your MedWorm account

Mashup: Social Bookmarking and RSS

A Mashup is a combination of two Web 2.0 tools, such as social bookmarking and RSS.

Here is an example of a college that created a mashup with RSS and their bookmarks from delicious. http://www.tcnj.edu/~library/moulaison/ItalianStudies.html

The college of New Jersey used a free service at www.feed2js.org.

Sign into your delicious account OR you don't have to have an account in Delicious to create a feed out of someone else's bookmarks.

On the bottom of each page in Delicious is an RSS icon for that particular group of tags.

Click on the RSS icon on the bottom of the page.

Grab the feed URL and then plug it into the service at feed2js.org, then feed2js will create some HTML code that you can paste it into a web page.

DEMONSTRATIONS

Step 1: Build a Feed at http://feed2js.org

- Click on Build

- Enter a Feed URL (grabbed from Delicious)

- Things to change on this page:

- Show channel = No

- Number of Items

- Hide descriptions = 0

- Click on Preview Feed

- IF you like what you see, click on Generate JavaScript

- Copy and paste JavaScript within the <body> </body> tags of your web site (wherever you want the item to appear on your web site).

RSS TOYS

TOY #1 Create a Feed for a page that doesn't offer RSS

➔ www.feedity.com

➔ http://page2rss.com/

➔ http://www.feed43.com/

TOY #2 RSS to Email

There are two different types of services that come under this heading.

1. The **first** is a service called **Watch That Page**. www.watchthatpage.com

   a. This is a service that alerts you to page updates for pages that don't offer RSS.

2. The **second** service is for people who don't want to adopt RSS

   a. http://www.rssfwd.com/
   b. You can enter the Feed URL, along with your email address
   c. You will receive updates via email

TOY #3 RSS to PDF

➔Tabbloid is a free service offered by Hewlett-Packard http://www.tabbloid.com/

You don't have to register. Enter a feed URL and it creates a customized PDF newsletter that you can share with the people you serve who don't use RSS.

TOY #4 One-stop shops for RSS tools:

http://www.xfruits.com/
http://www.rss-specifications.com/unusual-rss-tools.htm

➔ **Does your university use Angel as a course management system? See below:**

Creating a Course Syndication Folder in Angel

A course syndication folder allows you to post new course content, such as files, and then you require your students to subscribe to the folder. Students will receive all new content via their RSS reader.

- Sign into Angel
- Courses ➔ Lessons
- Add Content
- Choose Course Syndication Folder
- Give folder a title
- Access➔ Viewable by Students
- Save
- Add Content ➔Choose File or Link
- If you choose File, navigate to the desired file, click on Upload file
- If you choose Link, name the link, enter the link into the Link URL box in the Link Settings section of the page. Click Save.
- Then, to subscribe to the feed for the newly created folder, <u>each student</u> will access the folder on the lesson page and:
  - Right-click on the RSS Feed Icon in Angel

  - Choose *Copy Shortcut* from drop-down menu
  - Open up your RSS Reader
  - Paste the shortcut into the Add Subscription section of your Reader
  - You will now see all the items that are contained in your <u>Angel Course Syndication Folder</u>

[1] April 2007. 7 Things You Should Know About RSS.
[http://connect.educause.edu/Library/ELI/7ThingsYouShouldKnowAbout/39401]